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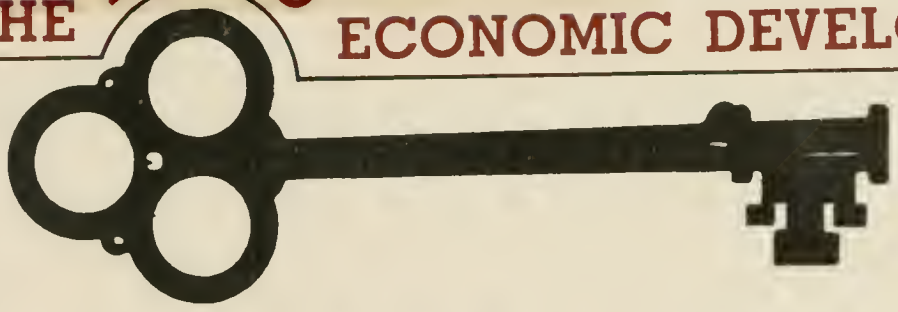
...RKFORCE –

THE KEY TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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SURVEY RESULTS

MONTANA EMPLOYERS

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Fall 1990

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Council on Vocational Education and the Project Steering Committee members are pleased to present the results and findings of the Montana Employer Vocational Training Needs Survey. We thank Montana employers for their responses and suggestions for effectively utilizing Montana's vocational technical education, job training programs, tribal colleges, adult basic education, apprenticeship, and JOBS programs. These delivery systems are vital for economic development and for preparing employees who possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential in the workplace. Accordingly, we urge policy makers and those involved in planning effective training delivery systems to carefully consider the recommendations of this report.

This report comprises one component of the project titled, "A Quality Workforce - The Key to Economic Development." The project was initiated by the Montana Council on Vocational Education in partnership with other state agencies, schools, institutions, and associations and the primary goals of this effort are as follows:

- foster a closer working relationship between vocational technical education, job training programs, other service delivery systems, and employers;

- identify the training needs and partnerships which exist between the service delivery systems and private sector;

- identify areas where vocational technical education, job training, and other service delivery systems can enhance and more effectively contribute to Montana's economic development.

SURVEY SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

272 Montana employers received the Survey of Employer Training Needs in Montana in April 1990 and 102 (38%) of these employers completed and returned the survey. Half of the businesses/industries were randomly selected from the Department of Labor and Industry tax listings and the other half were randomly selected from lists provided by the vocational education and job training program operators. An equal number of small, medium, and large businesses/industries were selected.

WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS

From the survey results, the following business/industry characteristics were identified:

Location

16%	open rural area (2,000 or less)
31%	city 10,000 and under population
16%	city 10,000 to 25,000 population
37%	city over 25,000 population

Size of Business

Full Time Employees (35 hours or more per week)

29%	1-9	30%	10-49	20%	50-99
6%	100-249	6%	250-299	9%	500 or over

Part Time Employees (Less than 35 hours per week)

61%	1-9	14%	10-49	13%	50-99
5%	100-249	6%	250-299	1%	500 or over

Employees Hired in 1988-89

68.05%	High School Graduates
9.47%	Vo-Tech Centers
7.66%	4-Yr. Colleges Providing Vo-Ed
5.64%	Community Colleges
4.79%	JTPA Programs
1.56%	Tribal Colleges
.56%	Apprenticeship

TRAINING NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

What Employee Competencies are Most Important?

Following, in rank order, are the competencies that employers feel are most important:

1. Positive working habits and attitudes.
2. Ability to follow directions.
3. Communications (speaking and listening).
4. a. Reasoning and problem solving skills.
   b. Interpersonal Skills.
5. Ability to assume responsibilities.
6. Reading and writing skills.
7. a. Basic math/science skills.
   b. Personal appearance and grooming.
8. Specific vocational technical skills.
9. Leadership skills.
10. Understanding of economic concepts.

Employers also identified customer service, motivation, and honesty as being important for employee success.

Employers indicated they have been able to find employees with needed competencies from all of the various training delivery systems.

Do Employers Utilize Customized Training?

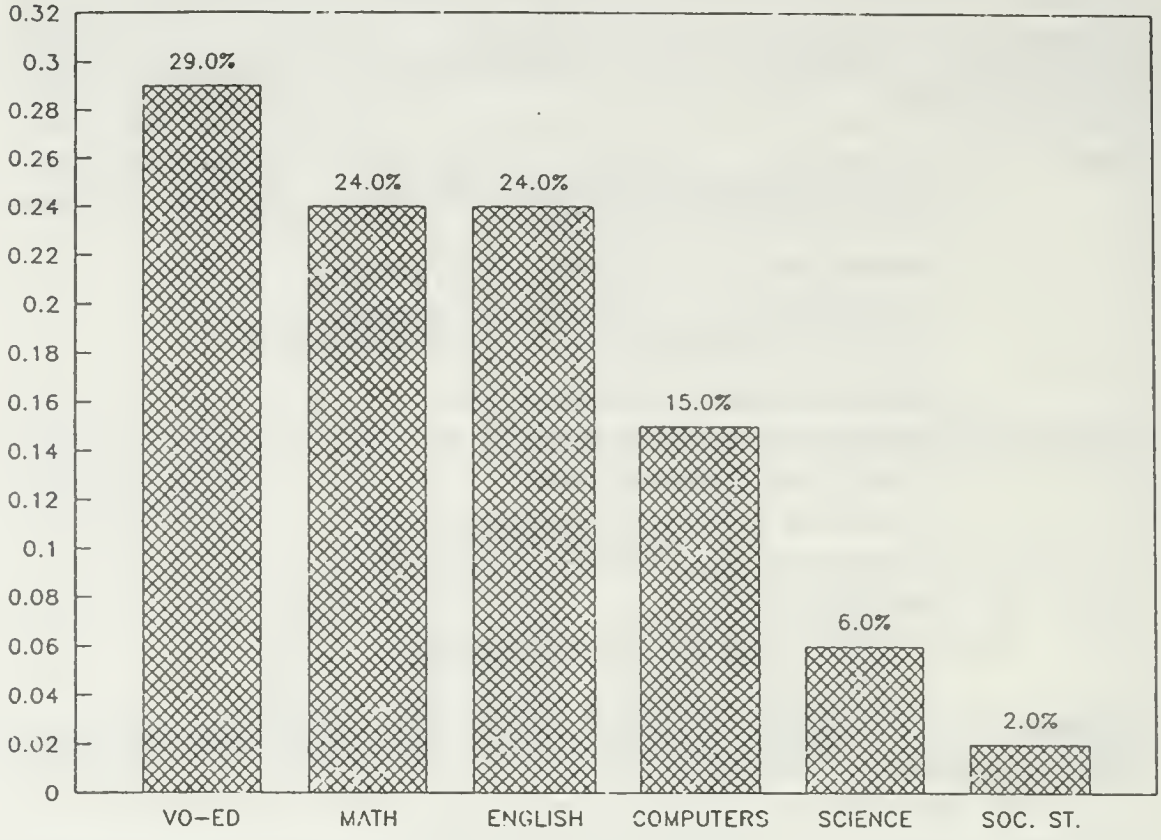
FORTY PERCENT of the employers reported they had utilized customized training developed by vocational education delivery systems. The majority indicated satisfaction with the effectiveness of this training.

Why Was Customized Training Not Utilized?

The reasons listed by employers for not using the various delivery systems for specific training needs are listed below in rank order:

1. Courses offered were not relevant.
2. Location was not convenient.
3. a. Education or training was costly.
   b. Courses were not offered when training was needed.
4. Curriculum could not be modified to meet specific needs.

Which Subjects or Training Areas Do Employers Prefer for their Employees?



Foreign language and fine, visual, or performing arts were not among employer's first and second choices.

Where do Employers Learn of Vocational Technical and Job Training Offerings?

In rank order, listed as first choices, employers indicated the following as their primary source of information about vocational technical and job training program offerings:

DIRECT CONTACT	43%
WORD OF MOUTH	24%
DIRECT MAIL	22%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER	11%

Employers did not rate television or radio among their first choices as their primary source of information.

TRAINING PROVIDED BY BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

NINETY PERCENT of the businesess/industries surveyed conduct training or retraining for their employees in the five training categories as listed below:

On-the-Job 53%	Off-Hour 23%
Apprenticeship 16%	Dislocated Workers 2%
Disabled/Special Population 6%	

Seven employers reported they were unable to provide training due to training costs and difficulty obtaining qualified instructors.

SIXTY-THREE PERCENT of the respondents reported they would be interested in utilizing vocational technical training for employees.

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

SIXTY-EIGHT PERCENT of the employers reported they are involved in partnerships or linkages and reported involvement as follows:

• Summer Program for Students	30%
• Cooperative Training Work Programs	23%
• Internships for Students	20%
• Plant Tours	11%
• Contractual Agreements w/Instructors	8%
• Advisory Councils	6%
• Summer Job Programs for Teachers	2%

No responses were received for areas such as adopt-a-school partnership program or exchange of teachers and employers.

EMPLOYERS SUGGEST IMPROVEMENTS

For Training and Retraining to Meet the Needs of Business and Industry:

- Make training available on-site.
- Vocational personnel could canvas selected industries for suggestions and curricula.
- Vo-tech's should continue training individuals with hands-on technical skills, not strive to become community colleges.
- Persons responsible for training should develop cooperative arrangements where students could obtain on-the-job experience.
- Consult businesses and industries for input in developing training programs.

For Placement of Students With Montana Businesses:

- More interaction between businesses and training placement personnel.
- Establish an office where employers could contact students completing programs and who are interested in employment.
- Vo-Tech's should send out a listing of graduates with synopsis of experience, interests, and training.
- Schools, institutions, and job trainers need to provide more training emphasis in ethics, personnel theories, practices, computer applications, financial management, and psychology.
- Students need excellent reading and math skills, computer operator experience and/or programming, knowledge of finance economics, basic accounting.

- Appropriate personnel responsible for curriculum development should consult with persons from dealerships (agricultural and industrial areas) to determine training needs and for curriculum development.

- Encourage businesses to establish student scholarships where the students will work for the sponsor for a specified period of time after completion of training.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS IN WHICH MONTANA EMPLOYERS HAVE DIFFICULTY FINDING TRAINED PERSONNEL

Health Technologists, Technicians, and Related
Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers
Writers
Technologists/Technicians
Construction Trades
Marketing and Sales
Production Occupations
Administrative Support Occupations, Including Clerical
Management Occupations
Truck Drivers
Heavy Equipment Operators
Food and Beverage Preparation and Service Occupations